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CHAPTER 4

THE UNIVERSITIES

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THE UNIVERSITY NETWORK

ALTHOUGH there were still relatively few universities in western Europe in the fourteenth century, they occupied an unchallenged and powerful position in the development and diffusion of learning. The major centres of the university network remained the oldest universities, which had been founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century at Bologna, Paris and Oxford. Their prestige was unrivalled, and they attracted the largest numbers of students. They were both bench-marks for teaching standards and models for the institutional framework of newer foundations.

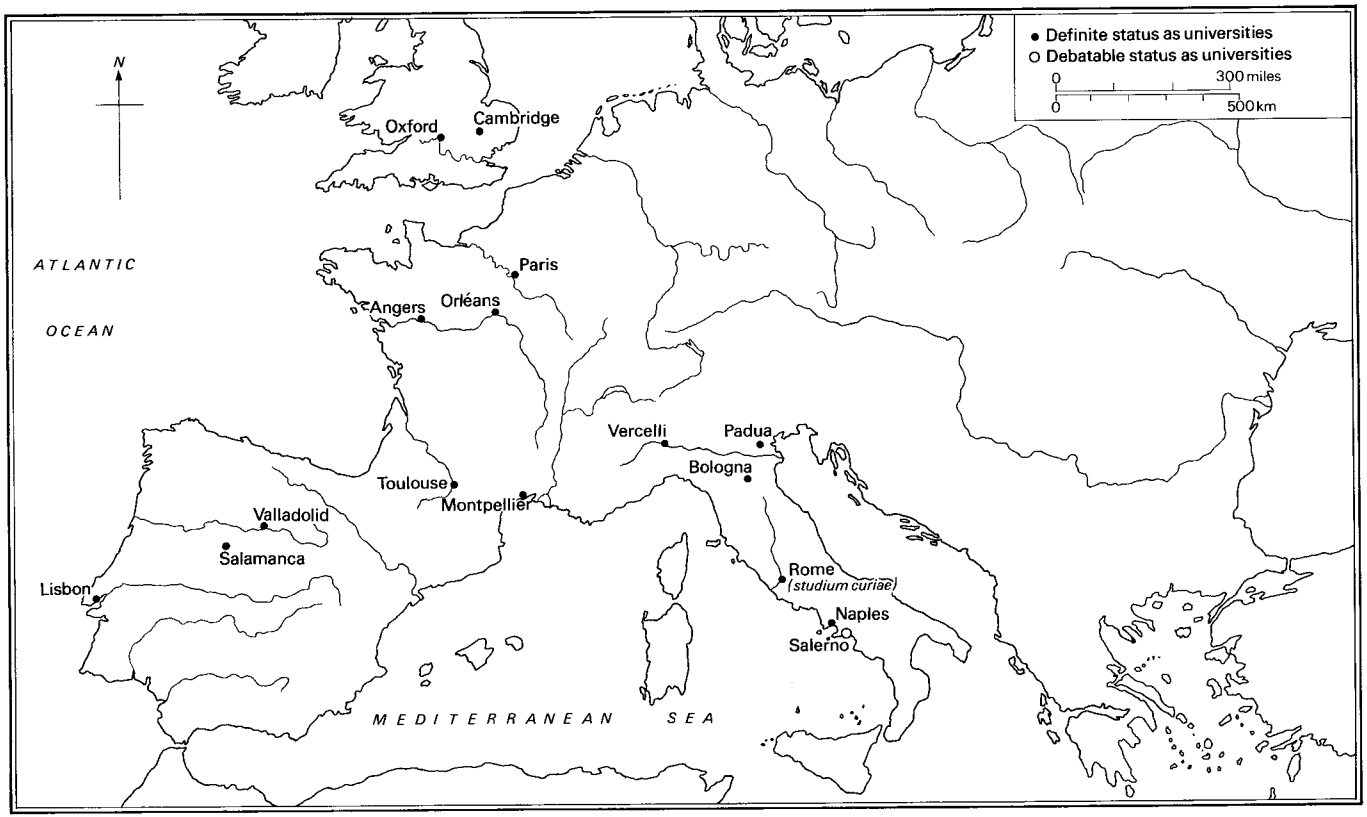
A dozen other universities appeared in the course of the thirteenth century, but their influence was much smaller. Although some, such as Cambridge or the faculty of medicine at Montpellier, were almost as old as those already mentioned, others were more recent foundations, dating above all from the 1250s and 1260s, amongst them Padua in Italy, Toulouse in France and Salamanca in Spain. Others (such as Lisbon, Lérida and the law faculty at Montpellier) dated from the very last years of the thirteenth century, and heralded the new foundations of the fourteenth.

These testified to the success of the university, which was an established institution from this date onwards. Nevertheless, the rate of foundation remained modest. In some cases, this was simply done by papal confirmation of the status of *studium generale* in schools which had already operated on a university level for varying periods of time: this happened, for example, to the law school at Orléans (1306), whose privileges were extended to those at Angers in 1364, as well as for the *studium* of Valladolid (1346) in Castile. Elsewhere, there were genuinely new foundations. Here, civil or ecclesiastical initiative was almost always crucial; henceforth, this increasingly replaced regroupings by university masters and their students in the quest for communal autonomy. Success was variable. In some places, above all where there were already

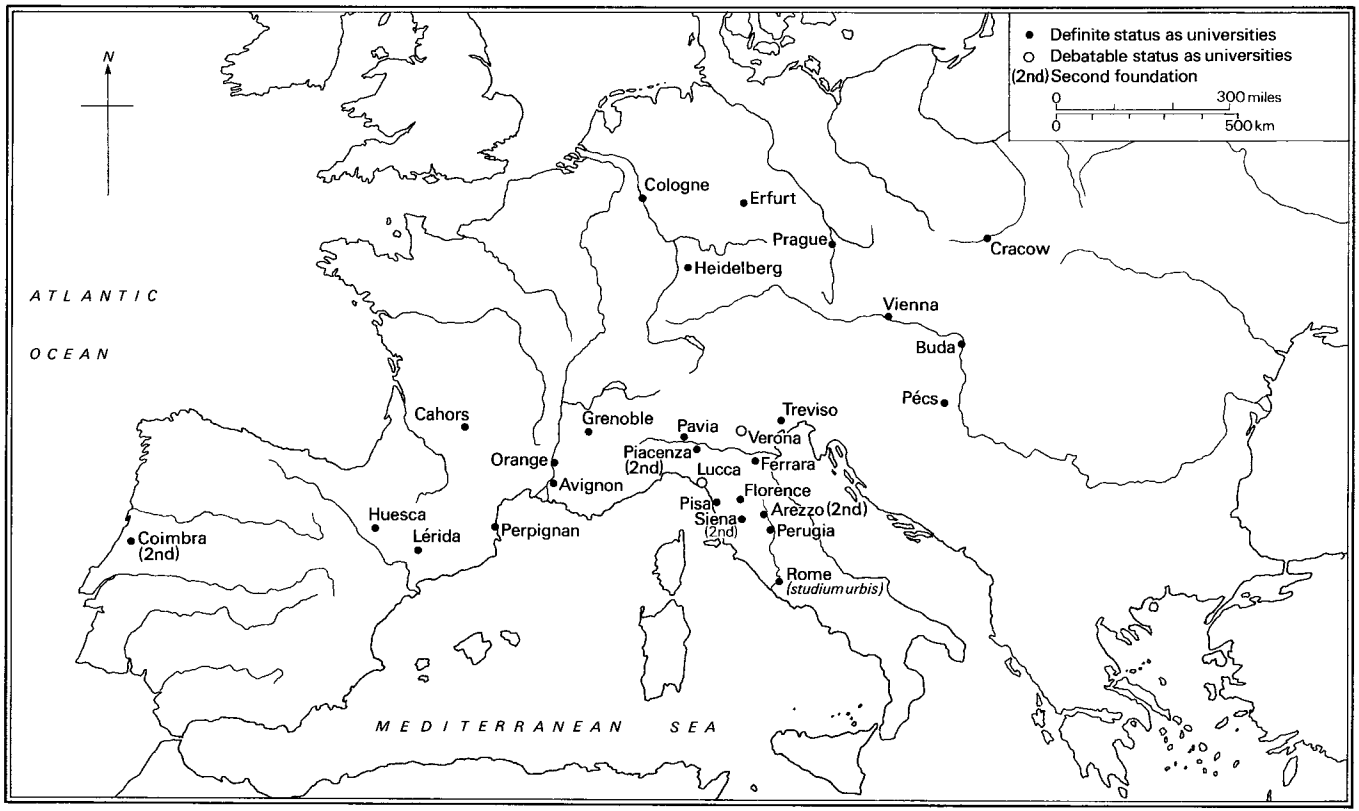
schools of some importance, the *studium generale* developed, although at different speeds. But elsewhere, notably when the ruler arbitrarily insisted upon a site where there was no scholarly tradition, the planned university either never saw the light of day or collapsed rapidly.

These new foundations continued, especially in southern Europe, until the beginning of the Great Schism (1378). In Italy, the universities of Rome (the *studium Urbis*, distinct from the *studium Curiae*, 1303), Perugia (1308), Pisa (1343), Florence (1349) and Pavia (1361) were established by papal bull confirming initiatives taken by municipal authorities or (at Pavia) by the duke of Milan. But there were also a large number of unsuccessful attempts to transform urban schools for the study of grammar and law into *studia generalia* by means of a papal or an imperial bull. This was the case at Treviso (1318), Verona (1339), Cividale del Friuli (1353), Arezzo (1355), Siena (1357), Lucca (1369) and Orvieto (1378). Similarly, although the long-established schools of medicine at Salerno remained active, it proved impossible to transform them into a true university in the course of the Middle Ages. In southern France, the university of Avignon emerged as a result of the combined efforts of the count of Provence and the pope (1303). In 1332, the consuls of Cahors obtained permission from their compatriot, Pope John XXII, to found a small university in his native town. On a still smaller scale was the foundation of the university of Orange by the Emperor Charles IV in 1365, at the behest of both town and ruler. As for the university set up in Grenoble in 1339 at the request of the dauphin, it disappeared after a few years. Finally, in the Iberian peninsula, when there were disturbances at the Portuguese university of Lisbon, it was temporarily transferred to Coimbra (1308–39 and 1355–77). The kings of Aragon (who had already established the university of Lérida in the county of Catalonia in 1300) founded small universities in the two other parts of their kingdom, Roussillon and Aragon, at Perpignan (1350) and Huesca (1354).

All these universities were founded in areas where Roman law prevailed, and they were chiefly concerned with the study of law. Their statutes were based on those of Bologna, modified according to local context. University foundations in northern and central Europe were much less common before 1378. The reasons for this delay are undoubtedly to be sought in the relative social and political archaism of these regions and the slow development of towns. Of course there had been German, Polish and Hungarian students since the thirteenth century, but they all went to study at Paris and Bologna. These individuals were often wealthy nobles, who had no particular interest in encouraging native universities in their own lands, which would greatly have improved access to university education. Nevertheless, in 1347–8, Emperor Charles IV, a ruler with a passionate interest in French culture, decided to create, with the help of the pope, an entirely new university at Prague, comprising eleven



Map 1 Universities active in 1300



Map 2 University foundations, 1300–1400

Map 3 Universities active in 1400

faculties on the Paris model; the first decades were fairly difficult, however. Still more arduous were the attempts of neighbouring rulers, who wanted to imitate Charles IV. In 1365, Duke Rudolf IV of Habsburg founded a university at Vienna, but it languished totally until the 1380s. The universities of Cracow (1364) and Pest (1367) founded by the kings of Poland and Hungary were even less successful and disappeared very quickly, casualties partly of unfavourable circumstances and partly of the absence of continued royal support.

This all changed after 1378, as a result of the Schism. While the university of Paris remained loyal to the pope at Avignon, the German towns and princes, together with the sovereigns of central Europe, declared their support for the pope at Rome. The crisis of the Schism reinforced the sense of national identity in these relatively young states; it made their rulers still more determined to control the training of their clergy and officials and to provide it in their own lands. The masters of the Anglo-German 'nation' were in a difficult position at Paris, and they listened readily to the appeals of their fellow-countrymen. It was to a considerable extent thanks to these men that the universities of Prague and Vienna were reinvigorated (with the arrival in 1383 of the famous Parisian theologian, Henry of Langenstein) and those of Erfurt (1379–89), Heidelberg (1385) and Cologne (1388) were founded. Although the new Hungarian university foundation at Buda in 1389 was little more successful than the previous one, the reopening of Cracow university (1397–1400) as a result of the initiative of King (Jogaila) Ladislas Jagellon, saw the dawn of what was to become one of the principal centres of European culture in central Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. All these new universities in northern Europe modelled themselves more or less on Paris, where many of their first masters had been trained; they adopted both the institutional framework of the university at Paris (with its rector, faculties and four 'nations') and its intellectual focus, teaching above all the liberal arts and theology. In southern Europe, by contrast, foundations ceased. The only exception is the foundation of the new university of Ferrara in 1391, for which the marquis of Este obtained a papal bull from Rome; but it was not really active until after 1430.

No picture of the universities of western Europe in the fourteenth century would be complete without some mention of the expansion of some old foundations by the addition of new faculties, in particular faculties of theology. The papacy was very vigilant on this point. Originally, its policy had been to impose a strict limit on the number of faculties of theology entitled to bestow the prestigious title of 'doctor of sacred theology' (*doctor in sacra pagina*), restricting this to a few centres of excellence, whose influence was incontestable and orthodoxy guaranteed. In practice, since Cambridge was still a minor university, this meant that Oxford (whose students came almost entirely from within the British Isles) and, above all, Paris had a monopoly of theological

teaching at the highest level, although it was understood that the pope always retained the right to grant doctorates by papal bull, either directly or by means of the *studium Curiae*.

The situation changed in the mid-fourteenth century. Paris and Oxford were torn apart by quarrels over doctrine which weakened their claims to a monopoly. There was a whole range of local and national pressures for universities to be complete in themselves, each with the full range of faculties. The papacy thus adopted a new policy, whereby theological teaching was not concentrated in particular centres. Prague had had a theological faculty since its inception. After 1360, such faculties proliferated, especially in southern universities, where there was admittedly a general readiness to elevate local, mendicant *studia* to the status of university faculty with the right to grant degrees. The popes thus established a theology faculty at Toulouse and at Bologna from 1360 onwards, at Padua in 1363, Pavia in 1369, Salamanca in 1396 and Lisbon in 1400. During the Schism, the pope at Rome, who had no reason to have anything to do with Paris, followed a similar line in the new German universities (Vienna, Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt) and at Cracow; the first regents were often masters trained in a secular discipline at Paris.

Finally, we need to remember that the network of the *studia generalia* only represented the upper level of a whole range of educational institutions which probably expanded in the course of the fourteenth century. This is not the place to discuss domestic and professional apprenticeship, undoubtedly the most common form of education at the period. Nor can we examine the private tutoring found amongst the aristocracy and some *bourgeois* families. But there were undoubtedly also schools that were not universities. In towns and even certain rural settlements, small grammar schools, financed privately or by the municipality, taught the rudiments of education to children and adolescents. Of course there were also parish schools and others endowed by religious foundations. Cathedrals and some collegiate foundations still had active chapter schools, indeed some were boarding schools. In some cases, the level was comparable with that of some faculties of arts. Still closer to the university model were the innumerable *studia* (of the arts, philosophy, biblical studies and theology) run by the orders of friars for the use of their own members throughout Christendom.

These institutions – as yet relatively little studied, except schools in England – will not be examined in detail in this chapter. We know little about their organisation, the origins of their masters (some were master of arts), the numbers of students or the content of their teaching. Nevertheless, it is very likely that all these institutions, and in particular the urban schools, became more numerous in the course of the fourteenth century. Such schools provided future university students (notably future civil lawyers who frequently

went straight to a faculty of law without any training in an arts faculty) with an essential foundation in Latin and logic. Even for those who did not go on to further education, they at least transmitted – in simplified form – some echo of the scholarly education developed in the universities. In short, the trend towards new university foundations in the fourteenth century seems to have been sustained by a generally increased demand for education in a much broader context.

INSTITUTIONAL STABILISATION

The university was a stable institution in the fourteenth century, fully recognised by the different actors on the political and social stage and accepted as an integral part of the mechanisms of law and government. University autonomy had sometimes been the focus of great conflict in the thirteenth century, but after that it was not challenged. The foundation documents (*Habita* of 1158, *Parens scientarum* of 1231) to which everyone referred were amplified in each university by a multitude of privileges and confirmations issued by the ruler or by the pope, who controlled the actual working of the scholarly community (*libertas scholastica*). Fiscal exemption and judicial immunity, independent organisation of teaching and examinations, internal control of doctrinal orthodoxy, control of the production and sale of university books were rights that had gradually been acquired or formally granted everywhere.

Naturally, there was no reduction in the tensions between the student population – a mass of young, turbulent foreigners – and the inhabitants and authorities of university towns, who quickly lost patience with their lawlessness and arrogance. Spectacular conflicts between 'town and gown' punctuated the history of fourteenth-century universities with brawls, murders, expulsion and voluntary exile. At Bologna in 1321, Toulouse in 1332, Oxford in 1355, Orléans in 1382 and 1387, the scenario was always identical: a chance brawl, speedy intervention by the local authorities under pressure from the population at large, a response from the university supportive of the students and characterised by a strike or 'secession', with order finally restored through the intervention of higher authorities, largely sympathetic to the universities. As a result, not only was there no further challenge to university autonomy, but the privileges of masters and students were generally confirmed and strengthened by such incidents. At Oxford, they ended by exercising a kind of tutelage over the town.

There was also very considerable economic support for the universities from secular and ecclesiastical institutions in the fourteenth century. This not only facilitated the development of the universities but also affected the way in which their members lived, and it raised their social status. As a result of the

ever-increasing number of papal reservations and provisions, the papacy had a constantly growing number of ecclesiastical benefices at its disposal and distributed them with tireless generosity to masters and students, accompanied by dispensations from residence. Income from such benefices was a regular source of subsistence for many. Towns and rulers also sometimes made contributions towards the living expenses of some students, but most importantly they began to assume responsibility for the salaries of teachers. The earliest examples go back to the thirteenth century but, generally, masters who did not have access to ecclesiastical revenues at this period were subject to the hazards of student fees (*collectae*). The earliest recorded instance of a salary paid by a municipal authority to a teacher of law comes from Bologna in 1279. This system became widespread after 1320, when it became standard practice in all Italian universities, as well as in the Iberian peninsula. In the latter case, teaching salaries were assigned on the ecclesiastical revenues (*tercias*) traditionally granted to the king. At Paris and Oxford, on the other hand, where the clerical character of the university remained much more distinct, the regents continued to live from the revenues of ecclesiastical benefices. In any case, the increasingly high level of fees (*collectae*) and examination dues paid by students, often matched by private legal and medical consultations, remained important sources of additional revenue everywhere.

The generosity of authorities and eminent individuals towards the universities was displayed even more through the foundation of colleges in the fourteenth century. This, too, was a phenomenon which had first appeared in the thirteenth century, but was fully developed in the next. The first colleges were small religious foundations designed to lodge a few poor students and the earliest date from before 1200, but establishments of some importance appeared after 1250, such as those at Paris (Sorbonne, 1257), Oxford (Merton, 1264; University College, 1280; Balliol, 1282) and Cambridge (Peterhouse, 1284). These were not only lodgings but also (as a result of the careful recruitment of fellows (*socii*), the presence of a library and a teaching organisation that complemented that of the faculties) real centres of intellectual life. The phenomenon expanded enormously in the fourteenth century: thirty-seven colleges, many of them tiny, were founded at Paris; five and seven were founded at Oxford and Cambridge respectively, but they were considerably more substantial. The institution even won acceptance in southern universities, with seven colleges founded in Toulouse in the fourteenth century, four at Montpellier and four at Bologna, including the prestigious Spanish College (1367).

College founders were sometimes high-ranking ecclesiastics (pope, cardinals, bishops, canons of chapters), sometimes rulers (witness the College of Navarre founded by the queen of France at Paris in 1304, King's Hall at

Cambridge, The Queen's College in Oxford) and sometimes important royal officials. Merchants and citizens showed much less interest in these institutions, which were of very little use to their cultural and religious preoccupations, and did not serve their political aims.

Although the social position of the universities was strengthened in the fourteenth century, there was no change in their essential structures. The two main institutional types which had appeared in the thirteenth century – the Parisian 'university of masters' and the 'university of students' of Bologna – remained classic models for reference, with all their essential cogs (chancellors, rectors, faculties, 'nations'). Nevertheless, the fourteenth century was the great period of university statutes. The crystallisation of university institutions meant that henceforth detailed statutes could be drawn up, and they were much more specific than the general privileges or circumstantial texts of the thirteenth century. Statutes of this kind were promulgated at Toulouse in 1311–14, at Oxford and Bologna in 1317, at Padua in 1331, Montpellier in 1339–40, Paris in 1366; Salamanca apparently had to wait until 1411. As for new universities, they had a complete corpus of statutes from the very outset, drawn from those of an older university (Toulouse was a model for Cahors) or, more frequently, combining features from both Paris and Bologna.

There were also few innovations in the range of subjects studied, or in the teaching programmes and the methods employed. The list of 'authorities' (Aristotle, the *Sentences* and so on) remained virtually immutable, while lecture and disputation remained the two essential forms of both teaching and examination. Should we infer from this relative lack of development in both teaching and institutional structures that the universities were already starting to ossify in the fourteenth century? This complex question requires a careful reply.

The most important universities, those which attracted the great majority of students and the most remarkable teachers (Paris and Oxford for philosophy and theology; Bologna for law, but facing increasing competition from Padua, Perugia, Pisa and Pavia; Montpellier, Bologna and Padua for medicine), seem to have been characterised by remarkable intellectual energies in the fourteenth century. The two previous chapters in this volume give some indication of the great numbers of new doctrines and texts which were developed in a university setting at this period. The lively debates to which they gave rise show that intellectual passion and – despite a few instances of official condemnations – considerable freedom of discussion continued to be the rule in faculties of arts and theology.

Without repeating what has already been said, we need to remember that

criticism of Thomist and Aristotelian thought was the central point of all philosophical and theological debate in the fourteenth century. This criticism was essentially Augustinian in origin and took very diverse forms. The product of theologians (such as Duns Scotus or Ockham) who were either Franciscans or secular clergy, it aimed to eliminate all determinist tendencies, simultaneously acknowledging both divine omnipotence and man's agonising freedom of choice: grace and free will, predestination and salvation became the key themes of Christian anthropology and were to remain so for a long time.

This challenge to the syntheses of the thirteenth century undoubtedly enabled, at least indirectly, the expansion of truly philosophical and even scientific disciplines, such as those which appeared at Oxford with the Merton 'calculators' and the brilliant logicians of the first half of the century (Walter Burley, Robert Kilvington, Richard Swineshead) and slightly later at Paris, with Jean Buridan and Nicolas d'Oresme, commentators on Aristotle's *Physics*.

The teaching of law in the first decades of the fourteenth century was equally dazzling. The 'glossators' were succeeded by the 'commentators'. Mastering all the resources of dialectic, these writers combined a synthetic and rational concept of law with a stronger desire to express the intangible teachings of the *ius commune* on the concrete realities of contemporary cities and states. In civil law, Cino da Pistoia (*c.* 1270–1336), Bartolus da Sassoferrato (1314–57) and Baldo degli Ubaldi (1327–1400), who taught at Bologna, Siena, Perugia, Pisa, Pavia, Naples and Florence; for canon law Giovanni Andrea (*c.* 1270–1348), founder of a veritable professorial dynasty at Bologna – these men all represent the zenith of medieval law which was reached at this period. Although they were less renowned, the French schools made famous by both the professors at Orléans and the doctors of Toulouse (*doctores Tholosani*) also produced a substantial body of works whose inspiration was close to that of the great Italians.

Finally, this period was the golden age of the medieval faculties of medicine, both at Padua and Bologna (where human dissection appeared under Mondino dei Liuzzi (1276–1328)), and at Montpellier. The medical faculty here saw distinguished doctors such as Arnau de Vilanova (*c.* 1240–1311), whose return to Galenism reflected a desire to create an essentially rational medical discipline, but which did not, nevertheless, lose sight of its therapeutic purpose. Guy de Chauliac (*c.* 1300–68), the famous author of *La grande chirurgie*, was another member of the Montpellier faculty of medicine.

These brief outlines are sufficient to demonstrate that the intellectual creativity of the great universities was in no way diminished in the fourteenth century. Moreover, it is important to emphasise that these new doctrines were generally in profound agreement with the social and mental expectations of

the period in a wide range of disciplines (preaching, political science, etc). They brought their authors great rewards. Bradwardine (one of the great Oxford 'calculators') became archbishop of Canterbury, Emperor Charles IV made Bartolus da Sassoferrato his councillor and gave him permission to add the imperial arms to his own coat. Oresme worked closely with Charles V of France, while Guy de Chauliac was doctor to three popes. On a broader scale, it could be said that the innovatory value of university teaching was clearly discerned by contemporaries and undoubtedly contributed to the success and the social advancement of university studies and those who had pursued them.

However, this intellectual brilliance should not be allowed to conceal darker aspects. Everywhere, there were also uninspired teachers who followed traditional doctrinal teaching. These sometimes even became official doctrines, such as Thomism with the Dominicans after 1309, or Scotism (admittedly susceptible to various interpretations) amongst the Franciscans. Prudence led other regents to a simple eclecticism.

On the other hand, the successes just mentioned took place above all in the oldest and most important universities. In the less important universities, in particular new foundations, there was only a distant echo of these great debates, partly because of the influence of largely local recruitment. Less distinguished teachers and students concerned above all to obtain the degrees which were essential for a successful career were easily satisfied with an unimaginative and undemanding curriculum. At the most, we can assume that the prescribed courses were still fairly well respected in the fourteenth century and that, as a result, graduate competence corresponded by and large to the criteria laid down in the statutes.

This relatively optimistic overall picture of the education disseminated by the universities of the period should, nevertheless, not obscure the fact that they were unable to free themselves from the limits and constraints inherited from previous centuries. These limits operated especially in relation to the stress placed on authorities, the scholastic method and the narrow framework of traditional systems of classification in academic disciplines, as well as the social prejudices of the students (*scolares*). There is consequently as much reason in the fourteenth as in the thirteenth century to deplore the stifling of biblical exegesis by the primacy of speculative theology, the marginalisation of sciences proper, the continued exclusion of technology, history, the classics, vernacular literature and oriental languages (despite the canon *Inter Sollicitudines* of the Council of Vienne, 1312), as well as customary law. It is true that direct criticism of the university system was still rare, despite the reservations of the earliest humanists (Petrarch) and the disappointment sometimes expressed by mystics from Master Eckhart to Gerard Groote. But no one risked a radical

challenge to an institution whose intellectual fertility seemed far from exhausted and whose social and political importance was more evident than ever before.

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

It is difficult to be exact about the composition of student populations in the west in the fourteenth century. It has nevertheless been possible to assess the size of particular universities. From around 1300, Bologna had well over 2,000 students. Elsewhere, there have been estimates above all for the end of the century, when source material becomes somewhat richer (with the earliest matriculation registers and rolls of papal petitions). The Black Death of 1348 and the epidemics that followed do not seem to have resulted in any lasting reduction in numbers, because the social need was so strong. Around 1380–1400, there were as many as 4,000 students at Paris (three-quarters of them in the faculty of arts), with 1,500 at Oxford, and well over 1,000 at Prague, Toulouse and Avignon (the last largely because of the presence of the papacy). But elsewhere, numbers dropped to well below this figure: 500–700 is probably a reasonable estimate for the universities of Cambridge, Montpellier, Angers and Orléans. And the *studia generalia* which were still smaller (for example, Cahors in France) had to be content with a few dozen students.

We know just as little about the composition of these groups of students. This was self-evidently a mobile population. Geographical mobility should not be overestimated, however. The major currents were those which brought students from the German lands and central Europe to Italy on the one hand (Bologna, Padua) and to Paris on the other. With much lower numbers, the medical university at Montpellier seems to have had a very wide area of recruitment. But elsewhere student mobility rarely went beyond national boundaries. The influence of Oxford and Cambridge extended essentially over the British Isles, that of Salamanca and Valladolid in Castile; Lisbon and Coimbra in Portugal. Italian students virtually never crossed the Alps, and the universities of southern France drew their students principally from the south of the kingdom and from neighbouring Catalonia and Aragon, where the national universities (Lérida, Huesca, Perpignan) remained very small.

Social mobility is still more difficult to define. Noble students (mainly from the lower and middle nobility) are the best-documented group, but their percentage varied considerably. There were not many of them (fewer than 5 per cent) in Mediterranean regions where they were in competition with the urban patriciate, nor in the famous arts faculties of Paris and Oxford, which seem to have had a significant intake with rural and relatively lowly origins. On the other hand, it seems that they represented up to 20 per cent of the students

from the empire who were prepared to travel to France or Italy to study; the German 'nation' had a fairly aristocratic cast everywhere.

University education offered real opportunities for social advancement. At least it did for those with a minimum of finance who had obtained a degree, for in the fourteenth century there was still a significant proportion of students – possibly the majority – which undoubtedly failed to graduate. We are largely ignorant of the destiny of these individuals. For graduates, on the other hand, and especially for licentiates and doctors of higher faculties, fine career prospects opened up, leading to prestigious and lucrative posts. When one member of a family gained a university qualification, it was often a decisive stage in their social ascent, sometimes the first step on the road to nobility. Nevertheless, we must be cautious in talking of the 'professionalisation' of university qualifications. Rather than any specific technical competence, they endorsed the mastery of a relatively theoretical and socially prestigious body of knowledge (Latin, dialectic, Aristotelian philosophy, Roman law, scholastic theology), while at the same time, there were networks of useful contacts, where former graduates and benevolent protectors combined their efforts to support the promotion of their young colleagues and protégés.

The Church was especially well disposed, substantially financing their studies and then opening the door to an ecclesiastical career to graduates. At the curia, the higher echelons of the papal administration were practically controlled by some forty doctors and licentiates, mainly qualified in civil or canon law. The episcopate was also very often composed of graduates and civil lawyers: it has been calculated that they constituted at least 50 per cent of the Avignon curia and as many as 70 per cent of the English episcopate in the reign of Edward III (1327–77). It was the same with cathedral chapters: around the middle of the century, 43 per cent of the canons of Laon and 64 per cent of those at Tournai were graduates, of whom more than half were from a higher faculty. These figures varied from country to country and were much higher in northern France and in England (where it was not unusual even to find graduates amongst the parish clergy) than in the Iberian peninsula or the empire. Fewer than one third of the canons of German chapters had followed any form of university study in the fourteenth century.

Service with individuals, with towns or rulers also offered an increasing number of openings to graduates, masters of arts and, above all, law graduates. In the fourteenth century, central law courts (such as the *parlement* of Paris) were in the hands of professional civil lawyers from the universities. Even in the provinces, the middle ranks of the royal administration employed some doctors or licentiates. The position was the same in the tribunals and chanceries of Italian towns. And doctors of medicine who did not teach had

no difficulty in finding employment in the entourages of princes, great men and prelates.

Fourteenth-century academics were perfectly aware of the social dignity of their work and titles (well established from this date onwards) and gave it visible expression. Their taste for grandeur and precedence, together with a highly developed sense of hierarchy, infiltrated every aspect of university life. It was articulated in the continual increases in examination fees and the ostentatious pomp of university ceremonies. Some of the most substantial colleges founded in the fourteenth century, such as the Collège de Navarre at Paris (1304), the Spanish College at Bologna (1367) or New College at Oxford (1379) expressed this new attitude in their luxurious buildings, important libraries and avowedly 'elitist' recruitment.

We should not anticipate events, however. Although, as we have seen, fourteenth-century universities still had great intellectual energies, it is important not to exaggerate either their professionalism or their social exclusiveness. Exceptional individual achievement, such as that of Jean Gerson at Paris or William of Wykeham in England were evidence that university education remained generally accessible to those with the necessary intellectual abilities. There was still something of the universalism that had determined the shape of these studies in the thirteenth century. Here, as in many other areas, it was the Great Schism which divided the west in 1378, precipitating a latent crisis.

EPILOGUE: UNIVERSITIES AND THE GREAT SCHISM

In one sense, the Schism undoubtedly gave new life to the old universalism. Faced with the collapse of papal authority and the unrest of the faithful, academics, led by Parisian theologians and canon lawyers, believed that they had been appointed to the task, if not of assuming power in the Church themselves, then at least of advising prelates and rulers, putting forward solutions and advocating means by which the crisis might be overcome. Despite pressure from the crown, the university of Paris took several months to rally to the Avignonese pope, Clement VII, and there were intense discussions between ardent 'Clementists' and advocates of a general council and those who advocated the resignation of both popes, possibly underpinned by a policy of neutrality or withdrawal of obedience. The debate spread from Paris to the universities of southern France, where there was unwavering support for the Avignonese cause. It also spread to universities in continued obedience to Rome, such as Oxford, Bologna, Prague and, above all, the new German universities where Henry of Langenstein (who had gone from Paris to Vienna) had great authority. While the claims of Clement VII and his supporters were rejected, there was also insistence on the urgent need for reform and the possible advantage of a

council. Stilled for a while, this debate was energetically resumed after 1392, in response to the intransigence of the rival popes. In 1398, members of the university of Paris were largely responsible for the 'withdrawal of obedience' of the kingdom of France.

Within France, only the university of Toulouse opposed this move. Since it was not followed by any other universities or rulers in the west, this premature decision had to be rescinded in 1403. Many members of the university of Paris greeted the 'restitution of obedience' with relief; they sent to Avignon the long roll of petitions (requests for papal dispensation), which they had foresworn in 1394 in order to demonstrate their reservations about the accession of Benedict XIII. In fact, an increasing number of university members realised that, although the need to combat the Schism was undiminished, the university itself could only profit from the conflict.

Bishops and rulers still undoubtedly sought advice from the university, but they did not have either the financial resources (in the form of ecclesiastical benefices) or the guarantees of autonomy assured by the papacy before 1378. The division of Christendom into two rival obediences resulted, as we have seen, in the creation of new universities and faculties; Paris in particular lost some of its clientele and its international influence. Recruitment there became more regionalised (as it was in smaller or more recent universities) drawing largely on the northern half of the kingdom of France. Everywhere, the collapse of papal power left the way open for increasing pressure from secular states and towns on universities. At Oxford, for example (despite the privileges of immunity that had been renewed once more in 1395), the university was unable to withstand the authoritarian interventions of the archbishop of Canterbury and, through him, of the crown. In 1411, after twenty-five years of vain resistance, all forms of Wycliffite teaching was decisively banned on the order of Archbishop Arundel.

Thus, like many other institutions at this period, without perhaps being fully aware of it, the universities were irresistibly caught up in the movement which, benefiting from the Schism, placed national churches and the modern secular state at the forefront of the political stage.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAPH	*Anais de Academia portuguesa da historia*
AASS	*Acta Sanctorum*, ed. J. Bollandus *et al.*
AB	*Analecta Bollandiana*
ABret	*Annales de Bretagne*
ABSHF	*Annuaire-bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*
ABurg	*Annales de Bourgogne*
ACNSS	*Actes du Congrès national des Sociétés savantes*
ADH	*Annales de démographie historique*
AE	*Annales de l'Est*
AEM	*Anuario de estudios medievales*
AESC	*Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*
AFH	*Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*
AFP	*Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*
AgHR	*Agricultural History Review*
AHC	*Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum*
AHDE	*Anuario de historia del derecho español*
AHP	*Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*
AIBL	*Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
AIPHO	*Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales*
AK	*Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*
ALKG	*Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters*
AmHR	*American Historical Review*
AMi	*Annales du Midi*
AN	Archives nationales, Paris
ANo	*Annales de Normandie*
APAE	*Anciens pays et assemblés d'état*
APH	*Acta Poloniae Historica*
ArtB	*Art Bulletin*
ASF	Archivio di stato di Firenze

ASI	*Archivio storico italiano*
ASL	*Archivio storico lombardo*
ASP	Archivio di stato di Pisa
AV	*Archivio veneziani*
BAE	Biblioteca de autores españoles
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BB	*Byzantino-Bulgarica*
BBA	*The Black Book of the Admiralty,* ed. T. Twiss, RS, 1, London (1872)
BBCS	*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*
BBHS	*Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*
BCRH	*Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*
BEC	*Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*
BEFAR	Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome
BEP	*Bulletin des estudes portugaises*
BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BG	*Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis*
BH	*Bulletin hispanique*
Bib. mun.	Bibliothèque municipale
BIDR	*Bolletino dell'Instituto di diritto romano*
BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BL	British Library
BMGM	*Bijdragen en Mededelingen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
BPH(1715)	*Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'à 1715)*
BRAH	*Boletín de la Real academia de la historia*
BS	*Byzantine Studies/Etudes byzantines*
BSAF	*Bulletin de la Société des antiquaires de France*
BSBS	*Bolletino storico-bibliografico subalpino*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BSPS	*Bolletino storico pisano*
BSPSP	*Bolletino della Societa pavese di storia patria*
BST	*Biblioteca storica toscana*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CAXI	*Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. C. Rosell, BAE, 66, Madrid (1875)
CBHB	Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae
CEFR	Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome
CEHE	*The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, ed. J.H. Clapham, M.M. Postan *et al.*, 8 vols., Cambridge (1941–89)

CEIII	*Crónica de Enrique III*, ed. C. Rosell, BAE, 68, Madrid (1877)
CFIV	*Crónica de Fernando IV*, ed. C. Rosell, BAE, 66, Madrid (1875)
CFan	*Cahiers de Fanjeaux*
CH	*Cuadernos de historia*
CH(E)	*Cuadernos de historia (de España)*
CHCA	*Congresso de historia de la corona de Aragón*
CIEB	*Congrès international des études byzantines*
CJI	*Crónica de Juan I*, ed. C. Rosell, BAE, 68, Madrid (1877)
CJII	*Chronique des règnes de Jean II et de Charles V*, ed. R. Delachenal, 4 vols., Paris (1917–20)
CMCS	*Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*
CMH	*Cambridge Medieval History*
CMRS	*Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*
CNRS	Centre national des recherches scientifiques
Cortes	*Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, ed. Real Academia de la Historia, I, II, Madrid (1861–3)
CPI	*Crónica de Pedro I*, ed. C. Rosell, BAE, 66, Madrid (1875)
CPIII	*Pere III of Catalonia (Pedro IV of Aragon) Chronicle*, trans. M. Hillgarth, with introduction and notes by J.N. Hillgarth, 2 vols., Toronto (1980)
CRC	*Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla desde Don Alfonso el Sabio*, ed. F. Cerda, I, Madrid (1781)
CRH	*Commission royale d'histoire*
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 50 vols., Berlin (1828–91)
CT	Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*
DA	*Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*
DBI	*Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, ed. A.M. Ghisalberti *et. al.*, 49 vols. continuing, Rome (1960–97)
DDG	*Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh kniazei XIV–XVI vv.*, Moscow and Leningrad (1950)
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DR	*Downside Review*
DVE	Dante Alighieri, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. A. Marigo, 3rd edn, Florence (1957)
DVL	*Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum*, I: *1300–1350*; II: *1351–1454*, ed. G.M. Thomas, Venice (1880–99)
EB	*Etudes balkaniques*
EcHR	*Economic History Review*

EETS	Early English Text Society
EHH	*Etudes historiques hongroises*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
EO	*Etudes orientales*
FC	Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. S. Luce *et al.*, 15 vols. continuing, Paris (1869–1975)
FHS	*French Historical Studies*
FOG	*Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*
FS	*Franziskanische Studien*
GAKGS	*Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens*
GBA	*Gazette des beaux arts*
GDGSO	M. Hayez (ed.), *Genèse et débuts du grand schisme d'occident*, Paris (1980)
GG	*Geschichte und Gesellschaft*
Gli Scaligeri	G.M. Varanini (ed.), *Gli Scaligeri*, Verona (1988)
GP, ed. Failler	George Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, ed. A. Failler, 2 vols., Paris (1984)
GP, ed. Bekkerus	George Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis Libri Tredecim*, ed. I. Bekkerus, 2 vols., Paris (1855–7)
Gregoras	Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, I–III, ed. L. Schopen and I. Bekker, *CSHB*, Bonn (1829–55)
HEMP	*Historia de España*, general ed. R. Menédez Pidal, 18 vols., Madrid (1957–90)
HF	Geoffrey Chaucer, *The House of Fame*
HG	*Hansische Geschichtsblätter*
HID	*Historia. Instituciones. Documentos.*
HJb	*Historisches Jahrbuch*
HL	Cl. Devic and J. Vaissete, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, ed. A. Molinier *et al.*, 16 vols, Toulouse (1872–1904)
HMGOG	*Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde van Gent*
HR	*Historical Research*
HT	*History Today*
HUS	*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
IARP	Index Actorum Romanorum Pontificum ab Innocenti III ad Martinum V Electum
IC, *Hist.*	Ioannis Cantacuzeni, *Eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, ed. L. Schopen, 3 vols., *CSHB*, Bonn (1828–32)
IESH	*Irish Economic and Social History*
IH	*L'information historique*

IHS	*Irish Historical Studies*
IJTS	*International Journal of Turkish Studies*
IMU	Italia medievale e umanistica
IZ	*Istoricheskie zapiski*
JBAA	*Journal of the British Archaeological Association*
JBaS	*Journal of Baltic Studies*
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
JEEH	*Journal of European Economic History*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JG	J. and P. Zepos (eds.), *Jus Graecoromanum*, I, Athens (1931)
JGF	*Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Feudalismus*
JGO	*Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*
JHI	*Journal of the History of Ideas*
JHP	*Journal of the History of Philosophy*
JIH	*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*
JItH	*Journal of Italian History*
JMH	*Journal of Medieval History*
JMRS	*Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JRSAI	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
JS	*Journal des Savants*
JSAH	*Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
JWCI	*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
JWH	*Journal of World History*
JZCH	*Jerónimo Zurita. Cuadernos de Historia*
KQS	Kirchengeschichtliche Quellen und Studien
LJ	*London Journal*
LS	*Lusitania Sacra*
MA	*Le moyen âge*
MAHEFR	*Mélanges de archéologie et d'histoire publiés par l'Ecole française de Rome*
MCV	*Mélanges de la casa de Velazquez*
MED	*Middle English Dictionary*, general ed. Hans Kurath, 11 vols. (continuing), Ann Arbor (1956–)
MEFRA/M	*Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
MH	*Mediaevalia et Humanistica*
MHR	*Mediterranean History Review*

MIÖG	Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung
MKVA	*Medelingen van de Koninklijkse Vlaamse Academie*
MPG	J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia e Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, 161 vols., Paris (1857–66)
MS	*Mediaeval Studies*
MSHAB	*Mémoires de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne*
MSHP	*Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France*
(N)AV	*(Nuovo) Archivio veneto*
NCMH	*New Cambridge Medieval History*
NMS	*Nottingham Medieval Studies*
NRHDFE	*Nouvelle revue historique de droit français et étranger*
NRS	*Nuova rivista storica*
OCA	*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols., Oxford (1991)
OESA	Order of Augustinian Canons
OFM	Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans)
OMCTH	Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica
OP	Order of Friars Preacher (Dominicans)
OSP	*Oxford Slavonic Papers*
Part.	*Las Siete Partidas*, ed. Real Academia de la Historia, 3 vols., Madrid (1807; repr. 1972)
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PER	*Parliaments, Estates and Respresentation*
Poly.	Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon,* ed. C. Babington and J.R. Lumby
P&P	*Past & Present*
PP	William Langland, *Piers Plowman by William Langland: An Edition of the C-Text*, ed. D.A. Pearsall, London (1978)
PrAPS	*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*
PRIA	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*
PRO	Public Record Office
PS	*Population Studies*
PTEC	*Positions des thèses de l'Ecole des chartes*
PU	*Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. M. Hein, E. Maschke, K. Conrad *et al.*, 6 vols., Königsberg and Marburg (1882–1986)
QAMK	Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte

QDHG	Quellen und Darstellung zur Hansische Geschichte
QFIAB	*Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*
QFGG	Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte
QSBG	Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte
QSGDO	Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Deutschen Ordens
RAH	Real academia de la historia
RBPH	*Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire*
REB	*Revue des études byzantines*
REG	*Revue des études grecques*
RF	*Romanische Forschungen*
RH	*Revue historique*
RHDFE	*Revue historique de droit français et étranger*
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*
RHGF	*Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*
RIS	*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. L.A. Muratori, 25 vols., Milan (1723–51); new edn G. Carducci and V. Fiorini, Città di Castello and Bologna (1900–)
RLR	*Revue des langues romanes*
RMAL	*Revue du moyen âge Latin*
RN	*Revue du Nord*
RPH	*Revista portuguesa de história*
RPV	*Registres du trésor des chartes,* III: *Règne de Philippe de Valois*, pt 1: *JJ 65A à 69*, ed. J. Viard, Aline Vallée and J. Favier, Paris (1978)
RQ	*Römische Quartalschrift*
RQH	*Revue des questions historiques*
RQly	*Renaissance Quarterly*
RS	Rolls Series
RSCI	*Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia*
RSH	*Revue des sciences humaines*
RSJB	*Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*
RStds	*Renaissance Studies*
RuH	*Russian History*
SAO	*Studia et Acta Orientalia*
SB	*Studia Byzantina*
SCH	*Studies in Church History*
SDECH	S.B. Chrimes and A.L. Brown, *Select Documents of English Constitutional History 1307–1485*, London (1964)

SEER	*Slavonic and East European Review*
SF	*Südost Forschungen*
SFGG	*Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft*
SG	*Studia Gratiana*
SH	*Studia Hibernica*
SHF	Société de l'histoire de France
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
SJ	Society of Jesus
SJH	*Scandinavian Journal of History*
SL	*Standen en Landen*
SM	*Studi Medievali*
SMGBO	*Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktineordens und seiner Zweige*
SMRT	*Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought*
SR	*Slavic Review*
SRP	*Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, ed. T. Hirsch *et al.*, 5 vols., Leipzig (1861–74); repr. with a sixth vol., Frankfurt am Main (1965)
ST	*Studi e Testi*
SV	*Studi veneziani*
SVen	*Storia di Venezia*
THSC	*Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*
TM	*Travaux et mémoires*
TODL	*Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
UTET	Unione tipografico-editrice torinese
VF	Vorträge und Forschungen
VKAWLSKB	Verhandlingen Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België
VMGOG	Verhandlingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Ouheidkunde van Gent
VQHF	Vatikanische Quellen zur Geschichte der päpstlichen Hof- und Finanzverwaltung
VSW	*Vierteljahrschrift fur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*
VV	*Vizantiiskii Vremennik*
WF	Wege der Forschung
WHR	*Welsh History Review*
ZHF	*Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZR	*Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte*
ZRVI	*Zbornik Radova Vizantoloshkog Instituta*

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CHAPTER 11

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Jacques Verger

AT least until the crisis of the Great Schism, the salient features in the history of schools and universities of medieval Christendom were progress and, on the whole, continuity. By contrast, the advent of the fifteenth century ushered in an era of change. There was still progress, certainly: new foundations, a continually expanding body of teaching masters and students, a social demand that was increasingly vigorous. At the same time, however, institutions were being transformed and becoming secularised; traditional autonomy was in rapid retreat before new state pressures; the curriculum itself became the focus of unprecedented criticism, both implied and outspoken. This chapter, then, will be devoted essentially to a consideration of the old and the new, of tradition and innovation.

GROWTH AND CHANGE IN THE SCHOLASTIC AND UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

Naturally, these systems continued to be based in large measure on structures inherited from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By about 1400, in the case of universities, there existed around thirty functioning *studia generalia* endowed with imperial and papal privileges which clearly defined their status. Of these *studia generalia* only three ceased to exist during the course of the century.[1] The rest varied greatly in importance: the oldest (Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Salamanca) remained the most prestigious, the only ones capable of becoming luminaries on the international stage and of attracting really significant numbers

[1] The following *studia generalia* were functioning in 1400: Angers, Avignon, Bologna, Buda, Cahors, Cambridge, Cologne, Cracow, Erfurt, Florence, Heidelberg, Huesca, Lérida, Lisbon, Montpellier, Naples, Orange, Orleans, Oxford, Padua, Paris, Perugia, Perpignan, Piacenza, Prague, Salamanca, Siena, *Studium Curiae*, Toulouse, Valladolid, Vienna. The *studium generale* of Treviso had without doubt disappeared before 1400. It does not seem that the *studia* of Salerno, Verona and Lucca can be considered as genuine *studia generalia*. The Universities of Buda (*c.* 1460), Piacenza (transferred to Pavia in 1412) and Florence (transferred to Pisa in 1472) disappeared from the above list in the course of the fifteenth century (Ridder-Symoens (1992), I, pp. 62–5).

of students – it has been calculated that by about 1450 there were likely to have been almost 2,000 students at Oxford, with twice as many in Paris.[2]

Universities of more recent foundation were of an altogether inferior standard. In some cases, particularly among the small legal universities in Mediterranean countries, they were antiquated institutions lacking vitality, attracting merely a few hundred local students (sometimes but a few score, as at Cahors or Orange in France), and at the mercy of all the hazards of the prevailing situation such as war and epidemic. However, of these newer universities others seemed to enjoy a period of ascendancy in the fifteenth century, though sometimes after difficult beginnings: not overburdened by traditional structures, they were able to engage celebrated lecturers and to offer courses of study which, influenced to a greater or lesser degree by humanism, broke new ground. Hence they expanded their catchment areas and competed openly with the older institutions. For instance in England, Cambridge doubled in strength (from 700 to almost 1,400) and so, having lagged behind Oxford for centuries, gradually made up leeway.[3] The earliest Germanic universities (Vienna, Heidelberg, Cologne) took advantage of declining Parisian influence in the Empire, itself a consequence of the Great Schism. Prague, and subsequently Cracow, made their mark as important centres of intellectual life in central Europe. On the Italian peninsula the relative stagnation of studies at Bologna allowed a few enterprising universities (Padua, Perugia, Siena) to attract in their turn a by no means negligible complement of students from beyond the Alps no less than from the peninsula.

This overall picture of development, together with the increasing desire of princes to acquire for their own purposes both national and regional universities, explains the increase in new university foundations during the fifteenth century – and this in spite of all the difficulties of the period. Between 1400 and 1500 there were thirty-four of them (in addition to four whose university status is open to debate and four reopenings of defunct universities). In effect the number of European universities more than doubled in the course of one century.[4]

[2] Aston (1979); Favier (1974), pp. 68–76. [3] Aston *et al.* (1980).

[4] The following *studia generalia* were founded during the fifteenth century: Würzburg (1402; disappears after 1413); Turin (1404); Leipzig (1409); Aix-en-Provence (1409); St Andrews (1411); Rostock (1419); Dole (1422); Louvain (1425); Poitiers (1431); Caen (1432); Bordeaux (1441); Catania (1444); Barcelona (1450); Glasgow (1451); Valence (1452); Trier (1454); Greifswald (1456); Freiburg/Breisgau (1457); Basle (1459); Ingolstadt (1459); Nantes (1460); Bourges (1464); Poszony (1465; disappears after 1492); Saragossa (1474); Copenhagen (1475); Mainz (1476); Tübingen (1476); Uppsala (1477); Palma de Majorca (1483); Sigüenza (1489); Aberdeen (1495); Frankfurt/Oder (1498); Alcalà (1499); Valencia (1500). The *studia generalia* of Pisa (after 1406), Pavia (1412), Ferrara (1430) and Rome (the *studium urbis*, 1431, later joined to the *studium curiae*: see Adorni (1992), pp. 416–21) all reopened. It is doubtful whether the *studia* of Parma (1412), Gerona (1446), Venice (College of Medicine, 1470) and Genoa (1471) can be classified as universities (Ridder-Symoens (1992), I, pp. 62–5).

Map 5 The universities of Europe in 1400 and 1500

While it is true that few of these new foundations ended in total failure (though there were some still-born schemes), most, at least before 1500, never rose above middling importance. A dearth of celebrated lecturers, catchment areas and spheres of influence that were essentially regional, and small student bodies, at best a few hundred strong, were common to all. Some very quickly stagnated; others, by contrast (one thinks of Caen and Bourges in France, of Louvain, of the new German or Scottish universities), enjoyed a period of fruitful development. The geographical distribution of these new foundations is a point to bear in mind. They were not to be found either in England or, except on the fringes (Turin, Catania), on the Italian peninsula, where demand must have been satisfied by the existing system. Seven *studia generalia* were founded in the second half of the century on the Iberian peninsula; all, though, were doomed to remain mediocre, with the exception of Alcalá, which became the bridge-head of humanism in the Spain of the Catholic monarchs. The eight new universities created in fifteenth-century France, soon to be frequently linked with provincial *parlements*, were in towns (for instance, Poitiers, Nantes, Bourges) that were asserting their authority as regional capitals. It was, however, in central and northern Europe (Germany, Scotland, Scandinavia) that the university movement attained its greatest intensity. The foundations there, financed and promoted by princes and towns, were an obvious manifestation of the vitality of these 'emergent countries' at the end of the Middle Ages and also testimony of their desire for full integration into a European culture whose predominant centres had previously been on the Italian peninsula, in France and in England.

The vitality of universities in the fifteenth century is not to be measured solely in terms of this wave of new foundations. One must also remember that in the period some old universities were endowed with new faculties, particularly of theology (Avignon in 1413, Montpellier in 1421, Lérida in 1430, Valladolid in 1436). Above all, the fifteenth century witnessed, in institutions previously accustomed to uncertainty in the supply of material necessities, an increase in the number of suitable buildings and of libraries. It witnessed, too, the foundation of numerous university colleges: the concept was, of course, an old one, but the social and cultural role of colleges, a point to which we will return, was strengthened, and with it grew the size of the buildings housing them, thus imposing their presence on the urban environment. Although college foundations were somewhat fewer than in the fourteenth century in Paris (twelve instead of thirty-seven) and in England (nine as against twelve), they were on occasion lavish (All Souls and Magdalen at Oxford, King's and Queens' at Cambridge); above all their numbers increased in the new universities in the countries that comprised the Empire (twenty-seven colleges

founded in the fifteenth century), in central Europe (three), in Scotland (three) and on the Iberian peninsula (six).

Universities formed the top tier of educational establishments in Europe during this period: it was in contemporary eyes the most prestigious, and remains for us the best known. The other tiers, which lacked the benefit of either royal or papal privileges, inhabited a world where diversity not consistency was the rule. Recruitment of masters was determined by fluctuating criteria; numbers of pupils, like their social origins, remain largely a mystery to us; the dearth of archival material prevents the recovery of facts about the financing and administration of such establishments; information is imperfect on the instruction actually provided, though no doubt it was a simplified counterpart of university courses.

First, there were the traditional ecclesiastical schools, to be found in large numbers in the vicinity of cathedrals, main collegiate churches and urban monasteries. Although primarily intended for young clerics or monks, they were able to accept external lay students as well; sometimes they were flanked by small colleges that served as lodgings for poor students. The importance of these traditional establishments should not be underestimated: St Paul's cathedral school in London was the most important one in the city;[5] while in 1469 the school of the old Benedictine monastery of St Giles in Nuremberg numbered an impressive 230 pupils.[6] The education meted out in such ecclesiastical establishments, usually under the responsibility of the chancellor or precentor, was of different kinds: there was the simple choir school for choristers; there were lessons in grammar, and there were, too, courses on philosophy, theology and sometimes canon law intended principally for future priests.

Even more numerous throughout western Europe were the institutions that may be classified under the general headings of 'small schools', 'Latin schools', 'grammar schools'. Their level varied enormously: priests might give lessons to a few of the parish children; elsewhere schoolmasters – sometimes priests, sometimes merely tonsured clerics or even laymen – set themselves up in a private capacity and entered into agreements with families to teach their children, on occasion taking them as boarders. Other schools were financed by religious foundations (one finds many examples in England) or by municipal grants; even so they were seldom entirely free of charge.

Numbers of pupils in a particular school might be as many as several hundred, but in most cases did not exceed a few score. Although several 'schoolmistresses' are known,[7] for example in Paris, pupils were mainly boys, usually aged between nine and fifteen. The background and qualifications of

[5] Orme (1973), pp. 194–223. [6] Miner (1987).

[7] The list of school-masters and school-mistresses in Paris having given an oath before the precentor of the cathedral is published in *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, III, no. 1713.

teachers were extremely varied, and the control in theory exercised over them by the ecclesiastical or municipal authorities was often nebulous. Only a minority of these masters possessed a university qualification (Master of Arts or Master of Grammar). Teaching was focused primarily on 'grammar', that is the study of Latin (reading and writing) to a more or less advanced level, supplemented by rudimentary arithmetic. It is difficult to judge to what extent the vernacular featured in this education. The clientele of schools might come from relatively humble backgrounds and include sons of artisans or peasants. As for the nobility and patriciate, they frequently preferred the solutions afforded by private tutoring.

Without doubt it was in the fourteenth century that the number of grammar schools started to increase appreciably in a number of western countries. This expansion continued in the fifteenth century, by which time it was not uncommon to find such schools not only in sizeable towns, but even in small market towns and in villages. In the second half of the fourteenth century in England, at least seventy-two localities are recorded as having a school; in the second half of the fifteenth century the figure rose to eighty-five.[8]

One must be careful, however, not to paint too rosy a picture. In the fifteenth century all towns on the Italian peninsula, even small and average-sized ones, financed one or several municipal schools, but north of the Alps it was a different story. Even if there, too, most important towns had several schools, it was far from being the norm in less significant localities. In the diocese of Châlons-sur-Marne in Champagne only thirty-seven parishes out of 300 are certified as having had a school during the fifteenth century.[9] Furthermore, many schools appear to have existed only intermittently, and their standard frequently must have been third-rate. Most were not destined to rise above an elementary level, and rare indeed were schools capable of imparting a sound grasp of Latin and of preparing pupils for possible study at university. The majority of the male population, and more particularly the female, was therefore condemned to illiteracy, and the invention of printing was to make only a very gradual impact on elementary education.

This education, it must be said, was not as yet attracting the attention of either princes or the Church. Schoolmasters, unlike doctors of the universities, did not enjoy a high social standing – even early humanists scarcely referred to them except to denounce their brutality or ignorance. The responsibility for primary education devolved upon municipalities and families, whose financial capacities were limited. The fifteenth century did, however, produce some interesting innovations in education and witnessed outside, or on the fringes

[8] Orme (1973), pp. 291–325. [9] Guilbert (1982).

of, traditional milieux (cathedrals, monasteries, universities) the appearance of reputable establishments receptive to new ideas.

Not to be considered here are the *studia* of the mendicant orders which had been in existence since the thirteenth century and where those orders' future lectors and preachers received what was virtually a university education. It is possible that sometimes secular students were accepted. In the universities themselves some colleges, following a movement of fourteenth-century origin, continued to develop their own courses in competition with the faculties, particularly of arts; increasingly autonomous, these colleges *de plein exercice* (that is to say providing a complete course) were thus able to open their doors to such humanist disciplines as Greek and rhetoric; for example, the Sorbonne in the 1460s, and Magdalen College, Oxford, in the closing years of the century.

During the fifteenth century some university colleges initiated grammar courses in annexes, so that future students could be better prepared. In like manner grammar schools in Oxford and Cambridge enjoyed an excellent reputation, because although they remained external to the universities, they were supervised and fostered by them.

Other institutions were completely independent of the universities. On the Italian peninsula in particular, where as early as the beginning of the century humanists such as Pier Paolo Vergerio and Leonardo Bruni had stressed the importance of deficiencies in education, and where arts faculties offered only limited possibilities, new grammar schools and schools of philosophy of a high standard were founded in some towns. So, in Venice, a city lacking a university, the fifteenth century saw the birth of the Rialto school (philosophy) and the School of San Marco (*studia humanitatis*) for young patricians destined for state service. Mention must also be made of the 'humanist colleges' (*contubernia*) set up at the instigation of communes or princes by Gasparino Barzizza in Padua (1408), by Guarino da Verona first in Verona (1420) and later Ferrara (1436) and by Vittorino da Feltre in Mantua (1423). These institutions, whose clientele was fairly aristocratic, were characterised both by the broad-minded discipline to which pupils were subject and by curricula imbued with new ideas (the importance of rhetoric, direct access to classical texts, the study of Greek).

Outside the Italian peninsula a few similar initiatives can be found; although infinitely fewer in number and less innovatory, they did express an identical awareness of the deficiencies of traditional education in arts faculties. In England the colleges founded by Bishop William of Wykeham at Winchester (1382) and by Henry VI at Eton (1440) were designed to give future Oxford and Cambridge students a solid grounding in grammar. The school of Sélestat in Alsace (1450) likewise was a nursery for teaching masters of grammar and rhetoric in the Rhineland universities (Basle, Freiburg).

As regards scholastic reform the most important movement beyond the Italian peninsula in the fifteenth century was that of the Brethren of the Common Life. This religious reform movement (the *devotio moderna*) was born in the Low Countries at the end of the fourteenth century and soon adopted as one of its fundamental objectives the creation of grammar schools able to provide for pupils both a stable environment and effective teaching. The atmosphere was austere and very religious, but the educational principles (streaming of pupils into classes according to ability; direct approach to the text of the Bible and the church fathers), which echoed humanistic ideas, proved to be of immense importance in the future. The principal school of the Brethren in the fifteenth century was at Deventer in Gelderland, where Nicholas of Cusa, Erasmus and Rudolf Agricola were students. From there the movement spread rapidly. The Brethren opened a large school in Louvain adjacent to the university, and at the end of the century Jan Standonck, by reforming the college of Montaigu (1490), even introduced the principles of this educational system to Paris. Standonck subsequently settled in Louvain, where in 1499 he set up his *domus pauperum* within the university itself.

Medieval schools and universities had abandoned to apprenticeship what might be termed vocational training; the usual milieux for this were families, merchants' shops and, for the sons of the nobility, princely courts. During the fifteenth century one does, however, find here and there, and in embryonic form, the rudiments of vocational training, probably an indication of a rise in cultural expectations even among craftsmen, scribes and legal practitioners, for whom a university education seemed out of reach or inappropriate. One finds a few 'masters of the abacus' referred to on the Italian peninsula, particularly in Tuscany – they taught the basics of arithmetic and accountancy to the sons of merchants. In London the Inns of Chancery and Inns of Court, which date from the fourteenth century, achieved full maturity in the fifteenth: they were essentially private schools, where chancery and common law practice was taught. They trained, in a more practical way than university civil law faculties, a significant proportion of the administrative and judicial personnel of the monarchy. They enjoyed genuine prestige, and jurists of the calibre of Sir John Fortescue emerged from them.

THE CURRICULA

If one moves on from the educational system itself to the courses and curricula offered, one finds a similar mixture of sound, but occasionally hidebound, traditions, and innovations still in need of perfecting.

Obviously we are best informed about universities – they have left an abundance of detailed statutes, syllabuses and manuscripts used in teaching. In

essence education remained faithful to its roots, which are to be found in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, themselves heirs in large measure of the earlier Middle Ages and late Antiquity. The classification of knowledge, the hierarchy and division of disciplines, which was mirrored in the hierarchy and division of faculties, the list of ancient and modern authorities, all remained those of an earlier age.

The teaching of grammar was based on Donatus and Priscian, on occasion complemented by Evrard de Béthune and Alexandre de Villedieu. Aristotle continued to reign supreme in the study of logic and philosophy, not so much in the form of a coherent body of doctrine, but rather as a sort of universal vocabulary imposing on all and sundry its terminology, intellectual categories and the concepts, either implicit or explicit, of its psychology, physics and cosmology.

Likewise, in the superior faculties, teaching methods as well as curricula were in direct line of descent from those of previous centuries. The gloss and the question were still the two basic intellectual procedures, of which the *lectio* and the disputation were the practical application. Scholasticism, that strict, even inflexible combining of authority with reason, which operated within the imperious framework of the syllogism, reigned supreme over nascent intellectual curiosity. It was Aristotle's *Organon*, sometimes improved upon by Peter of Spain's *Summulae* (of the thirteenth century), that was thought to provide everyone with the master-key to the definition and explanation of all knowledge.

As for the actual subject matter of this knowledge, it was still thought to be enshrined in a sacrosanct list of authorities: in the faculty of medicine, Galen and his Arab commentators; in the faculties of civil and canon law, the *Corpus iuris civilis* (i.e. the codification of Justinian, sometimes in the thirteenth century modestly complemented by the *Libri feudorum*) and the *Corpus iuris canonici* (definitively concluded at the beginning of the fourteenth century by the incorporation of John XXII's *Extravagantes*); and in theology, the Bible and four *Books of Sentences* of Peter Lombard. The list of 'authorised' modern commentators, whose treatises, summaries and apparatus complemented the authorities themselves and constituted a more or less indispensable means of access to them, was a little more flexible: doctors of the Salernitan and Montpellier schools, glossators and commentators of Bologna, Parisian logicians and theologians; almost all of them, though, dated back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, or at best to the first decades of the fourteenth.

Yet it would be a mistake to conclude on the basis of the strength of this traditional apparatus that at the end of the Middle Ages university teaching was atrophied and utterly opposed to progress. In philosophy and theology, for instance, the revival which had started in the fourteenth century around what one may term (to use a convenient, if controversial, word) 'nominalism'

continued to have an impact on numerous arts and theology faculties – in Paris and Oxford naturally, but also in the new German universities, particularly Tübingen, where Gabriel Biel taught between 1484 and 1495. This *via moderna* had its opponents in the advocates of the *via antiqua*, who were themselves split into Thomists and Scotists. Lively debates sprang from this antagonism. Some universities (Heidelberg, Freiburg, Ingolstadt) organised the co-existence of both schools of thought – students could choose their degree course in one or the other. Elsewhere hostilities broke out: 'nominalist' authors were banned in Paris from 1474 to 1481, but by the end of the century the 'modernists' had regained the ascendancy. All this goes to show that university life in the fifteenth century had not necessarily sunk into arid eclecticism and routine. In the same way Averroism, which formerly had been banned in Paris, maintained its standing in various universities on the Italian peninsula, especially at Padua where Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) taught.

Law and medical faculties, too, enjoyed in the fifteenth century a late flowering of scholasticism. On the Italian peninsula the jurist Paolo di Castro and the canon lawyer Nicholas de Tudeschis finished the standard work begun by the fourteenth-century commentators. Output in the medical field continued unabated: ninety-seven authors of medical treatises have been identified in fifteenth-century France, scarcely fewer than in the fourteenth (107); among them several reveal decided originality, Jacques Despars in Paris, for example, and Jacques Angeli in Montpellier.[10] However, this comparative vigour was far from being ubiquitous and, it must be stressed, remained confined by the strait-jacket of the scholastic method, which conspicuously limited its scope. The fifteenth century, however, was to break new ground by casting doubts upon these traditional constraints.

One should not overstate the case. The success enjoyed by education, the obvious signs of which have been indicated above (the founding of new schools and universities, the general increase in student numbers), shows that those with political powers and, more broadly, society's dominant classes still had faith in it. We will return to this point. Criticisms were frequently merely implied: the historian believes he can detect them, observing as he does the increasing number of flaws in the system; one cannot be certain that contemporaries were as clearly aware of them. These flaws are, however, indisputable, and it does appear that they became worse during the course of the century. Degree courses became disorganised; whereas many students left university without even obtaining the first degree, others achieved one without completing the requisite length of study as prescribed by statute. In consequence of this, and because of the absenteeism endemic among teaching staff, curricula

[10] Jacquart (1981), pp. 199–205.

were often only partially covered, and the practice of disputation fell into disuse. Examination fees and costs escalated, yet examiners were frequently accused of culpable bias towards wealthy candidates. In some cases the qualifications awarded no longer appeared to accredit any genuine study whatsoever.[11]

The causes of these abuses were manifold, but it seems evident that all testified, among other things, to a failure on the part of courses offered to adapt to the actual aspirations of students. In short they appear as evidence of the intellectual dissatisfaction felt towards the existing system by many students and even teaching masters (including some who were gaining advantages from it on a social level).

As well as these significant reactions, the fifteenth century also witnessed the expression of formal criticisms of scholastic and university institutions. Those of religious reformers and popular preachers were relatively traditional: they denounced the arrogance of teaching doctors, the greed of jurists, the pointless subtleties of a too-theoretical theology. Princely counsellors, from their more political standpoint, condemned the disorderly behaviour attributed to students, at the same time deprecating the undue length of courses and their excessively theoretical nature. Lastly, humanists deplored the barbarity of scholastic Latin and the neglect of Greek, the contempt of universities for classical texts and the humanities, and their indifference towards the moral education of their students. As an example one thinks of the sarcastic remarks which Lorenzo Valla, who had been invited to the University of Pavia in 1431 as professor in rhetoric, directed at his colleagues of the superior faculties – remarks soon resulting in his expulsion.

Various individuals proposed reforms. In Paris as early as 1400 the chancellor, Jean Gerson, drew up a plan of reform for the faculty of theology.[12] Committees of the Council of Basle examined several schemes of a similar nature. In France, Charles VII's counsellors were continually urging the king at the end of the Hundred Years War not to neglect, in his task of re-organising the kingdom, the reform of the university.

Actual attempts at reform did occur. In France, for instance, it was rare for a university to escape: Angers underwent two reforms, in 1398 and 1494; Toulouse had two series of reform statutes, between 1394 and 1425 and between 1470 and 1499; in Orleans and Paris two 'general reforms' were imposed, in 1447 and 1452 respectively; at Avignon, however, a similar attempt in 1459 remained a dead letter.[13] Mention should also be made of the reform of Bologna University by the cardinal-legate, Bessarion, in the 1450s.[14] These

[11] Verger (1977) and (1986a). [12] Jean Gerson, *Œuvres*, II, pp. 23–8. [13] Verger (1976a).
[14] Nasalli Rocca (1930).

various attempts were, however, of limited scope. The reformers, principally preoccupied with the problems of university privileges and public order, and hamstrung by conservatism among teaching staff, achieved only minor adjustments to degree courses and syllabuses.

It would be wrong to conclude that there were no genuine innovations in the educational sphere in fifteenth-century western Christendom. There were, but they were limited, localised, and often occurred in institutions and areas of marginal importance. The pillars of the system – the old universities and superior faculties – did not exactly welcome them.

Some of the vehicles of educational revival have already been mentioned. The schools of the Brethren of the Common Life, the Italian humanists' *contubernia*, some university colleges (at least as far as optional courses were concerned) introduced new concepts of the master–pupil relationship. For the tedious repetition, year in year out, of the same *lectiones*, often but irregularly delivered, they substituted, above all in the teaching of grammar and the arts, a system of graded classes, where pupils were streamed according to their age and standard. The pleasure of free discussion in small groups replaced, or rather complemented, inflexible formal lectures or scholastic disputations. Apart from drilling in the prescribed syllabus, more emphasis was now placed on moral and religious education. In some institutions authorised games began to feature; some schools put on plays.

New ideas surfaced in the curricula. Here the superior faculties were the sector least affected: conservatism among the doctors and political constraints had the combined effect of preserving old syllabuses and stifling innovation. The latter scarcely found a toe-hold, except in the informal fringe activities of those small groups sympathetic to fresh ideas. Arts faculties, which were more diversified and less structured, were far more accommodating, as were some non-university establishments and others in the process of breaking away. In these cases educational revival went hand in hand with the realisation that what today would be labelled 'secondary' education was a specialised area, totally different from the university field proper, that is to say the superior faculties.

Clearly this development was a gradual process and was not to reach its full potential until the sixteenth century. The first signs, however, were already visible in the fifteenth. Italian universities seemed the most progressive: after 1450 practically all arts faculties on the peninsula offered a complete cycle of *studia humanitatis*. North of the Alps, too, there was an increase, at least spasmodically, in courses in rhetoric, Greek and Hebrew, often thanks to Italian teaching masters, or teaching masters educated on the peninsula. Indeed, the humanists' *peregrinatio academica* was then gathering momentum, and many were those from north of the Alps who journeyed to the Italian peninsula, especially Padua, to be initiated into the new ideas.

A few examples will suffice. In 1458 Lilio Tifernate started a Greek course in Paris; a little later on the Savoyard Guillaume Fichet added lessons in rhetoric within the Sorbonne college itself to the fairly traditional courses he gave as a theology regent. In Cambridge it was the Franciscan Lorenzo Traversagni di Savona who inaugurated a course of study in humanistic rhetoric. Yet the new German, Hungarian and Polish universities were those most receptive to Italian influences, thanks to courses subsidised by the patronage of princes and prelates. In 1447 Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (the future Pope Pius II) gave courses on classical poetry in Vienna; after him came the humanist astronomers, Georg Peurbach and Johannes Müller (Regiomontanus), later to be found at the Hungarian University of Pozsony. From 1440 onwards Gregory of Sanok and other lecturers educated in Padua fostered the humanistic environment at Cracow from which Copernicus would emerge – he studied arts there from 1491 to 1495.

Progress was not confined to courses in the humanities. Linked to them, philosophy, the sciences (mathematics and astronomy), law, theology and biblical exegesis began in their turn to bow to the philological demands brought into favour by the humanistic revival of grammar and rhetoric. Angelo Poliziano (1454–94) embarked on a new edition of the *Corpus iuris civilis*, while giving distinguished courses on Greek poetry in Florence. In Paris Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples (*c.* 1450–1537) undertook humanistic editions of Aristotle and the Bible. New texts, new doctrines too. From the beginning of the century Jean Gerson had been preaching mystical theology in reaction to the dry-as-dust excesses of scholasticism – it found a sympathetic response among humanists; John Doket, destined to become provost of King's College, introduced Florentine neoplatonist doctrines (Leonardo Bruni, Marsilio Ficino) to Cambridge by way of his commentary on the *Phaedo* (*c.* 1470).

One final question needs to be asked. How far did the invention and spread of printing influence university and scholastic education before 1500? In truth, though the university libraries of France and the Italian peninsula seem to have been stagnating in the fifteenth century, German and English universities and colleges did not wait for the arrival of the printed book: even before 1450, frequently thanks to princely generosity, they enlarged considerably their collections of manuscripts, including classical texts or recent works of Italian humanists. One of the best examples is Erfurt, where in 1433 a former rector, Amplonius Ratingk, bequeathed his magnificent library of 637 volumes to the college he had recently founded (the university itself already possessed more than 800). University towns usually did not lack either manuscripts or the necessary means to produce copies at relatively modest expense. While early printers were not exactly scornful of university and scholastic clients, they did prefer to set up business in large, commercial towns without universities

(Nuremberg, Augsburg, Milan, Venice, Lyons, London). Though not entirely neglected, university towns were in the second division: the first workshop in Paris was established near the Sorbonne in 1470; Louvain had one in 1473, Cracow in 1479, whereas Cambridge, for example, had to wait until 1520. The textbooks produced by these early presses were above all elementary grammar books with some classical authors and manuals by Italian humanists; they were therefore aimed principally at pupils of pre-university schools and those attending arts faculties. It was only more gradually that the 'authorities' and *summae* in use in the superior faculties had the distinction of getting into print. It cannot be claimed that before 1500 printing genuinely revolutionised the conventions of university teaching.

INSTITUTIONS AND THE AUTHORITIES

It seems to have been generally accepted that scholastic and university institutions altered little in the fifteenth century. Church schools clearly remained under the direct control of the establishments to which they belonged – monasteries, convents, cathedrals or collegiate churches. Urban schools were usually governed by the contract drawn up between a commune and the teachers it had recruited. The situation in universities, however, was more complex. Officially they remained the same as the thirteenth-century foundations, autonomous bodies of academics and/or students, with the same constituent parts – 'nations' and faculties – and the same elected officers – rectors, deans, proctors. University autonomy relied on a body of privileges granted by ecclesiastical and lay authorities, guaranteed ultimately by the Papacy. Statutes drawn up by the universities themselves regulated their internal administration and discipline.

New universities of the fifteenth century adopted statutes modelled, more or less faithfully, on those of older universities. In the kingdom of Aragon, Lérida (itself inspired by Bologna) was the most popular prototype; in Germany and central Europe, Paris furnished the pattern, although with considerable modifications. New French provincial universities adopted statutes that mingled elements from various sources (Paris, Bologna, Montpellier, Toulouse).[15] In Scotland the statutes of St Andrews were modelled on those of Orleans and Angers and in their turn were copied in Glasgow. It should be added that the last decade of the fifteenth century did witness the birth of an original system, that of the 'university college' or, if preferred, the college endowed with the right to confer university degrees: it was found in Spain at Sigüenza (1489) and Alcalà (1499) and in Scotland at Aberdeen (1494–1505).

[15] Verger (1995a).

Yet, behind this relatively immutable façade, considerable changes were taking place. It was not that university autonomy and privileges had become meaningless: masters and students were devoted to both, above all in the oldest and most prestigious establishments, such as Paris and Oxford. Masters and students fought to defend their traditional freedoms, above all by strikes, and they managed to preserve a not inconsiderable part of them. They were able to remain more or less in control of the organisation of courses and examinations, and to preserve crucial elements in the guarantees which conferred on them a privileged personal status with protection from military requisitions, taxes and local secular courts. They were, however, powerless to prevent challenge to the actual principle of university autonomy, that is to say challenge to the right of the *studia generalia* to act without any control save that of the Papacy (which was remote and sympathetic), thereby corporately escaping the constraints of the political and economic system which princes were imposing on their states. By the end of the Middle Ages such constraints were being strengthened in every sphere, political power was increasingly intolerant of corporate autonomy and its officials were able to interfere in the internal affairs of universities knowing they would be supported.

At the same time it needs to be said that some universities were by reason of their intellectual capacity aspiring to a direct political role; this merely served to precipitate the tightening of external control. Faced with a variety of serious problems the kings of France had traditionally tended to seek the opinion and support of Paris University. The crisis of the Great Schism, followed by the Councils of Constance and Basle, in which they participated in large numbers, reinforced the belief of Parisian teaching masters that, by assuming the mantle of a faltering authority (in this case that of the Papacy), they could be directly involved in the actual exercise of power. Thus, during the first decades of the fifteenth century the University of Paris, through its chancellor, Jean Gerson (see his speech *Vivat rex* of 1405), offered its services to the king;[16] it took part in the representative assemblies, while later it was to support the Anglo-Burgundian regime and press vigorously for the conviction of Joan of Arc. Such political involvement was rash and would, after 1436, earn the undying rancour of Charles VII. One might quote other examples: Prague University would be one of the protagonists in the Hussite revolt, on the side of the moderate 'Calixtins';[17] Oxford's long-standing tolerance towards Wyclif and his Lollard heirs would expose that university to a purge at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Lollardy had become the ideological basis of a movement perceived as subversive by the Lancastrian kings.

In a broader sense it is the general evolution of political institutions at the

[16] Jean Gerson, *Œuvres*, VII/1, pp. 1137–85. [17] Kaminsky (1972).

end of the Middle Ages that explains why states everywhere, whether principalities or urban republics, sought to reduce the autonomy of the old universities to a level they found acceptable, and to endow new ones, which they themselves had created, with liberties that were strictly limited and supervised.

What form did such assumption of control take? As shown, it in no way precluded princely interest in, and respect for, the institutions themselves or for the men who made them function. The latter's personal status was guaranteed; they were not begrudged honours and favours; career prospects were good, even posts in princely circles being open to them. In the fifteenth century, towns and sovereigns conceded substantial financial support to promote universities. Considerable sums were devoted both to new foundations and old institutions for the establishment or enlargement of colleges, the erection of university buildings (previously an almost unheard-of occurrence), the endowment of student scholarships or salaried lectureships, the stocking of libraries. The understanding is that this munificence was commensurate with the university's willingness to accept a greater degree of control. However, in established universities things did not always go smoothly, and princes sometimes had to impose a 'general reform' on the uncooperative in order to bring statutes and privileges into line with the requirements of the new political order. The university reforms previously discussed were practically all achieved through the exertion of political power. The great reform of Paris, for example, was officially promulgated in 1452 by a papal legate, but had in fact been prepared by a body of royal commissioners appointed by the government of Charles VII. Its avowed aim was to restore order to an institution whose repeated strikes, critical spirit and corporate arrogance were particularly irritating to the king.

The state's desire for control was brought to bear even on the actual content of courses with regard to the strictness of their orthodoxy. At Oxford Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, acting in the king's name as much as his own, hunted out suspected Lollards. In Paris in 1474 Louis XI approved the temporary expulsion of all 'nominalists'.

Above all governments were sensitive to the issue of university privileges. There was no thought of abolishing them, but rather of supervising them strictly by subjecting them to the authority of the state's officials and ordinary courts. In France, in the 1440s, the *parlements* of Paris and of Toulouse had their jurisdiction over universities confirmed and extended. At about the same time the office of chancellor at Oxford and Cambridge ceased to be held by a regent elected from among his peers; it passed into the hands of court prelates, intimates of the king. In cities of the Italian peninsula designated officials – *trattatores* or *reformatores studii*, 'Savi dello studio' – were in charge of implementing

the policy of the commune vis-à-vis its university. On the other hand the ancient weapon of the strike or secession, which had been the principal means of resistance of the *studia generalia*, everywhere fell into disuse.

Furthermore, princes wanted the right to oversee recruitment in institutions where previously the rule had been election or co-option of lecturers and the unrestricted registration of students regardless of their social and geographical origins. The institution of salaried lectureships (or of ecclesiastical prebends reserved for lecturers) allowed the authorities to intervene directly in the recruitment of teachers. As for student enrolment, it was to become subject to various rules and regulations. The communes and *signorie* on the Italian peninsula sought to insist on their subjects attending the local university; thus in 1407 Padua became the official university of the Venetian state. In theory foreign students were still welcome, but the schism and general warfare, together with an overall intensification of nationalist sentiments, meant that the threat of expulsion hung over them constantly. In 1470 Louis XI expelled from Paris Burgundian students who were subjects of Charles the Bold, and in 1474 he decreed that in future a French rector would be mandatory. At the same time the authenticity of students was more closely monitored. Public authorities, tired of seeing spurious or perpetual students claiming, by reason of university clerical status, those fiscal and judicial privileges to which they had no right, enforced stricter registration procedures and a maximum duration of study. Louis XII was to do precisely this in Paris in 1499.

There is no doubt that these measures did not as yet constitute coherent practice, but they did reveal an obvious shift in attitudes. The increased mastery of external authorities over universities (and the corresponding decline of ecclesiastical control) was in fact a response to fairly high social expectations, particularly from groups of officials and administrators who entrusted to universities their children's education. Some of the university men at least seem to have found their own interests mirrored in this development.

It would be a mistake to overemphasise the contrast between the almost ideal situation pertaining in the thirteenth century (recruitment that was not restricted by social and geographical factors, autonomous and democratic administration of institutions, enthusiasm for study) and the decadence at the end of the Middle Ages. Apart from the fact that such an ideal situation doubtless never existed, the comparison would at best involve the oldest universities, while scarcely making sense in terms of the more numerous recent foundations. It remains true that the general political climate of the fifteenth century exerted its influence on both the internal administration and the way of life of the universities. Hierarchical and authoritarian features were everywhere strengthened. 'Student power' on the Bolognese model, where it existed, like community spirit, was in retreat before the increasing weight of

political power, as also before the enhanced authority of the teaching doctors, who proved more tractable partners for princes. General assemblies were replaced by restrictive commissions. University life style was transformed so that magisterial authority and the influence of the hierarchies became more obvious. The decline of disputation in favour of *lectiones*, the increasing opulence of dress and facilities, the cost and lavishness of ceremonies, especially the conferring of degrees, had the cumulative effect of more clearly demonstrating the growing integration of universities into the controlling political order. This was where at the end of the Middle Ages the true 'aristocratisation' of universities lay, rather than in a hypothetical narrowing of social recruitment. This aristocratisation went hand in hand with a more pronounced local character. It is true that some old centres (Paris, Bologna) and new ones (Cracow, Louvain) retained sufficient prestige to attract students from a distance, although in limited numbers. Furthermore, the pull exerted by Italian humanists syphoned off growing numbers of students from all parts of Europe to the *studia generalia* of the peninsula (Padua, Ferrara, Perugia, Siena). Everywhere else, however, in consequence of the increase in the numbers of new universities, 'regionalisation' of recruitment became entrenched, an obvious sign of closer integration into the local social and political framework. Municipal elites and local bodies of officials tightened their grip on such institutions with greater ease. As 'living in' became the rule (in colleges, halls and all kinds of hostels) – something, for example, which the Paris reform of 1452 tried to impose – it proved an excellent way of stamping out certain aspects of traditional university life that could not fit in any more with the new social and political order.

SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES AND SOCIETY

Medieval schools and universities never developed on the periphery of society, since it was society's needs and expectations which in large measure dictated the evolution of educational institutions in the fifteenth century, as in the preceding ones. This does not mean that purely intellectual considerations were without influence. There is every reason to believe that society's demand for competent literates and university graduates continued to grow. Superimposed on the already strong demand from those countries where universities had existed since the thirteenth century was that from areas previously marginal, but now benefiting from newly founded schools and universities.

The Church remained a prodigious consumer. Only traditional monasticism remained aloof, while the mendicant orders continued to give a solid intellectual grounding to a significant proportion of their members, thanks to the dual network of their internal *studia* and of their university *studia*, whose numbers

increased through the creation of new faculties of theology. After preparatory studies in arts and philosophy, mendicants studied essentially theology. In many areas, above all in Mediterranean Europe, they more or less held the monopoly in this latter discipline, which prepared them for their roles as preachers or inquisitors. Among the secular clergy, on the other hand, canon lawyers vastly outnumbered theologians. There were, too, many clerics who possessed only a master's degree in arts. Be that as it may, one finds that in many areas the proportion of graduates in the secular clergy as a whole attained a previously unheard-of level in the fifteenth century. In England seventy-two out of seventy-nine bishops identified for the period 1399–1485 had studied in a university and one in an Inn of Court.[18] The same applied to canons: in fifteenth-century York, 80 per cent of the resident canons of the minster were graduates. As for France, at least in the north, the figures were comparable: the proportion of graduates among canons of Laon, which between 1270 and 1378 had been 43 per cent, by 1409 had doubled to 86 per cent (though of these almost half were mere masters of arts).[19] Elsewhere progress may have been slower, but everywhere it was apparent. In the Danish chapter of Roskilde, for example, the proportion of former students rose from 55 per cent between 1367 and 1430 to 78 per cent between 1431 and 1493, while the percentage of graduates, above all in arts, it is true, increased from 19 to 45.4.[20] At the end of the century the number of graduates in many places was so large that some were unable to obtain a canonry, and were forced to make do merely with a parish.

If an ecclesiastical career remained the most usual prospect for young men who had studied at school or university, demand from the lay sector made spectacular strides in the fifteenth century, although one needs to remember that during this period many secular posts could still be filled by clerics, at least by those in minor orders; one sees this in England, for instance. Generally speaking, lay graduates did not belong to princely councils, which remained the prerogative of the higher nobility. Chancelleries and sovereign courts of justice on the contrary – the king's bench, the *parlement* of Paris, for example – from the early 1400s were largely in the hands of lay graduates. Even where this was not yet the case, the numbers of graduates grew very rapidly during the century: at the Council of Brabant, the duchy's supreme court, they rose from 40 per cent to 70 per cent.[21] Even more numerous were the posts available in the local machinery of princely administrations which supported a satellite community of attorneys and lawyers. Here, law graduates might carve out for themselves a comfortable niche. At the end of the century, however, graduates had become

[18] Rosenthal (1970). [19] Millet (1982), pp. 87–100. [20] Mornet (1983).
[21] Ridder-Symoens (1981).

so plentiful, in the *bailliages* near Paris, for instance, that some doctors or licentiates were obliged, at the start of their careers at least, to accept subordinate posts, which in preceding generations had been filled by individuals without a university education.

Increasing numbers of towns, as well as the more or less independent city-states of the Italian peninsula and of Germany, and the *bonnes villes* integrated into the national monarchies of France, England and Spain were drawing upon the services of university-educated doctors and jurists. In some cases (Barcelona, Montpellier, Nuremberg), the persistent mistrust of the merchant patriciate restricted them to essentially vocational positions; elsewhere, they gained access in the end to the actual management of municipal affairs. Such promotion was obviously accompanied by significant social changes: bourgeois men of commerce began to send their sons to university and to marry their daughters to graduates. Private practice likewise offered opportunities to university graduates in law or medicine. Mere masters of arts, if they did not remain in the ranks of the clergy, could at least become school-masters.

Finally one needs to add that studying for its own sake, or at any rate studying without instant vocational prospects, was not unknown in the fifteenth century and perhaps enjoyed a certain revival. A more widespread desire for access to the world of literacy which printing, by producing an abundance of 'popular' books, would assuage in the second half of the century was one of the factors, among urban populations (even in artisan circles) and the nobility, conspiring to propel a growing number of young people into schools. Other influences were new demands, even from the laity, stimulated by the religious reform movements (to read the Bible), and the reputation, whether it was enjoyed for cultural or merely fashionable reasons, of Italian humanism. If the response of the tradition-loving faculties to these kinds of expectations was somewhat inadequate, the new schools (schools of the Brethren of the Common Life, humanist *contubernia*) were certainly more efficient, and this was one of the principal factors behind their success. In consequence of the new *peregrinatio academica* (precursor of the Grand Tour of more recent times) young English, German and Scandinavian nobles were beginning to venture to the Italian peninsula for a rapid excursion round the principal *studia*. This, too, was symptomatic of such cultural interests.

Given such conditions, in spite of a widespread demographic depression until 1450 at least, the definite increase, in both relative and real terms, in the numbers of people receiving education during the fifteenth century is easily explained; and this despite the 'misfortunes of the period'. If some of the old university centres (such as Paris, Montpellier and Toulouse) were perhaps undergoing a period of stagnation, elsewhere progress was evident: the total strength of Oxford and Cambridge in the period 1400–1500 rose from around

2,000 to around 3,000. It was in Germany that the advance was most spectacular: about 1480, 2,500 new German students registered each year, that is five times more than a hundred years before.[22]

Statistics alone are not enough. The progress they reveal provokes two main points. First, it must be remembered that, in spite of everything, only a small, essentially male, proportion of the population was involved. It is particularly noteworthy that although 'learning' was becoming increasingly important to them, many occupations remained outside the scholastic system, either through disdain or lack of awareness, and were thus limited to vocational apprenticeship or family associations – one thinks of the training of artists and architects, the beginnings of civil engineering (mines, metallurgy) and of military engineering (artillery, fortifications), or the principles of trading and shipping. Even occupations more closely related to scholastic disciplines were not really provided for by universities, which were satisfied with exercising a certain amount of jurisdictional control over them. Barbers and surgeons, notaries and scribes (soon to be replaced by printers) continued to be trained as apprentices. On a totally different level, in some bourgeois and noble circles, above all on the Italian peninsula, new types of learned associations (academies) sprang up, making it possible to economise on a traditional university education.

Secondly, one needs to enquire into the social and cultural significance of the enlarged scholastic and graduate population. Although some contemporary treatises complained of the overproduction of graduates – the first appearance of a theme destined to enjoy a long life – it would be wrong to claim that the expansion in numbers of those receiving education had reached a crisis point. While some graduates may have experienced early difficulties in their chosen careers, there was no glut of graduates. Although the shortcomings of universities, as considered above, reflected a certain lack of relevance in the courses offered, degrees none the less retained their value as social currency. One needs to substitute for the understandable, yet illusory, theory of a depreciation of knowledge and men of learning the notion of a 'general rise in the cultural level'. This seems better to take into account those developments to be found in the fifteenth century and beyond.

For all that, should one be hailing the birth of a modern meritocracy? In spite of the declining benefits of papal patronage, the spiralling costs of study and the restrictive rules adopted in some places, education was still a means of social mobility. Well-known individual cases can be quoted: Gerson, son of Ardennes peasants, and Nicholas of Cusa, son of a Moselle boatman. One recalls that almost 20 per cent of German university students in the fifteenth century were classed as *pauperes*; it is true that many never progressed beyond

[22] Schwinges (1986).

the arts faculty and, in consequence, the lower ranks of the secular clergy. Nowhere did the nobility monopolise educational institutions: its numbers in these were proportionally no higher than they were in society at large. At the beginning of the fifteenth century nobles accounted for scarcely 5 per cent of the population of universities in the south of France;[23] between 1380 and 1500 the figure at New College, Oxford, was less than 13 per cent, and most of those were gentry.[24]

Yet it is clear that the majority of students came from broad social strata of the middle rank, essentially rural in England, decidedly urban on the Italian peninsula and in the Empire – sons of farmers, artisans, tradesmen, reaping the benefits of a mobility that one might term 'oblique' or horizontal. Access to study provided the passport from the world of shops or trade to that of the clergy and to administrative posts that no doubt guaranteed more security and prestige. From the outset they had had financial means and personal relationships (kinship, friendship, protectors) and were thus able to accomplish without too much difficulty this change in occupation, sometimes compounded by a geographical move, which study and qualifications rendered possible. In succeeding generations one sees the formation of genuine graduate dynasties: places reserved in the best colleges, reductions in examination fees, books handed down from father to son, or from uncle to nephew; all these fostered the creation of castes or sub-castes of judges, lawyers, teachers, whose culture and learning were handed down as a family tradition and a hereditary commodity.

Certainly at the end of the fifteenth century there was no question of a glut of graduates. However, the schools and universities which developed at the end of the Middle Ages, rather than provoking widespread social mobility, seem above all to have allowed society to adapt to the changing political and economic situation of the age. This does not mean – no doubt fortunately for the history of western culture – that all the consequences, both short and long term, of the surge in education and learning had been foreseen and controlled.

[23] Verger (1976b). [24] Lytle (1978).

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Annales de Bourgogne*
AHR	*American Historical Review*
AM	*Annales du Midi*
AN	*Annales de Normandie*
Annales ESC	*Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*
BBCS	*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*
BEC	*Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*
BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BJRULM	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BL	British Library
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
DBI	*Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EconHR	*Economic History Review*
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHR	*English Historical Review*
HJ	*Historical Journal*
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
IHS	*Irish Historical Studies*
JHI	*Journal of the History of Ideas*
JMedH	*Journal of Medieval History*
JModH	*Journal of Modern History*
JWCI	*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
MA	*Le moyen âge*
NH	*Northern History*
NLWJ	*National Library of Wales Journal*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
P&P	*Past & Present*

RH	*Revue historique*
RHS	Royal Historical Society
RQ	*Renaissance Quarterly*
RS	Rolls Series
SATF	Société des Anciens Textes Français
SHF	Société de l'Histoire de France
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
STS	Scottish Text Society
THSC	*Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
WHR	*Welsh History Review*

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11 SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

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12 HUMANISM

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